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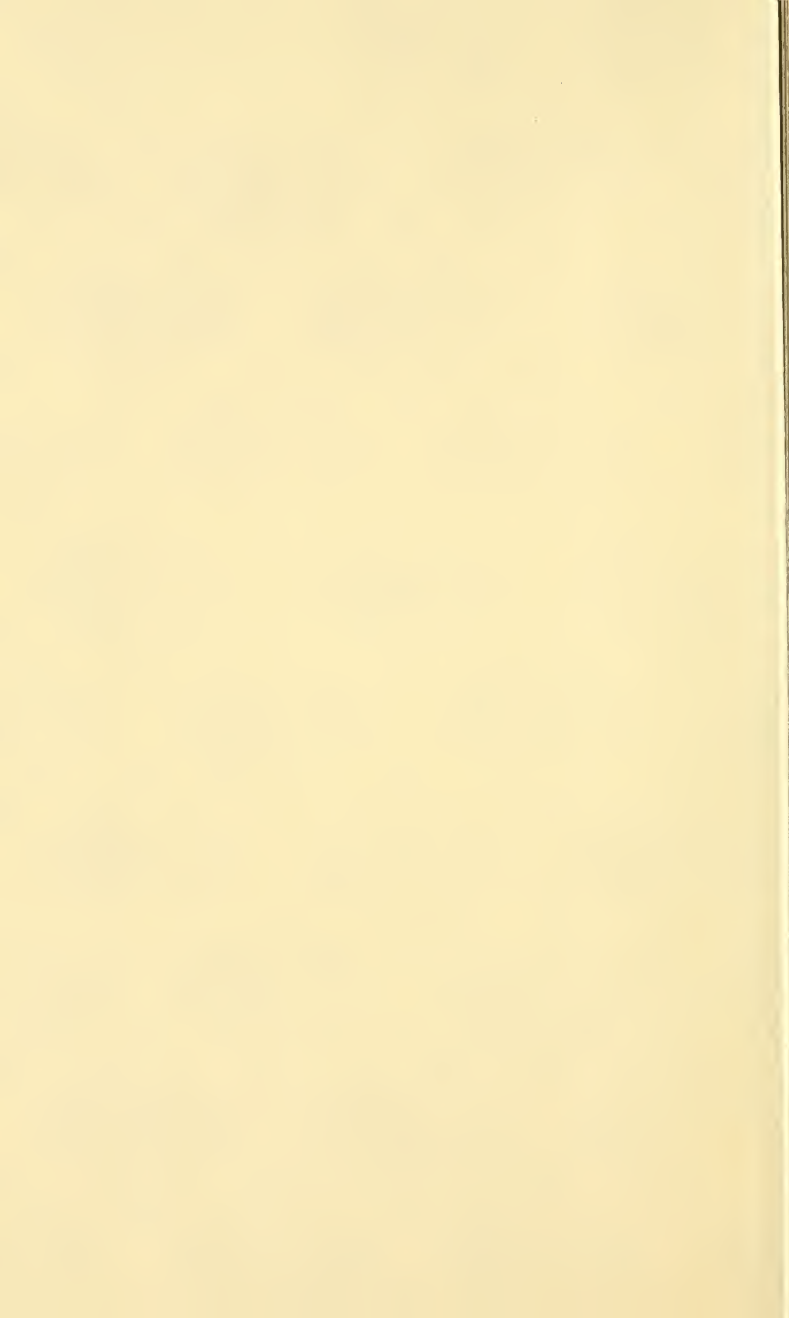
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HYLETHEN AND OTHER POEMS



Hylethen and Other Poems

By
Isaac Flagg

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Contents

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| HYLETHEN, A LYRICAL MISSIVE, 1896 | 1 |
| AFTER EGYPT, 1902 | 37 |
| THE STAR-GAZER, 1906 | 47 |
| THE ISLE OF CIRCE, 1907 | 61 |
| ULYSSES' CONVOY | 77 |
| (After Homer's <i>Odyssey</i> , Book Thirteen, at the beginning, 1917) | |
| AGAMEMNON'S RUTH | 89 |
| (Opening scene of Euripides' <i>Iphigenia</i> at <i>Aulis</i> , 1898) | |
| TEMPLE SONG | 95 |
| (From the <i>Ion</i> of Euripides, 1888) | |
| WINGS TRIUMPHANT | 103 |
| (Programme for Scenes from the <i>Birds</i> of Aristophanes, presented in Greek by students of the University of California at the dedication of the Greek Theatre, Berkeley, 1903) | |
| AVE PISCATOR | 111 |
| (Reception to Dr. Henry Van Dyke by the Faculty Club, Berkeley, 1905) | |

CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| PROLOGUE AND EPILOGUE | 116 |
| (Written for Congreve's comedy <i>Love for Love</i> , presented by students of the University of California, 1896) | |
| CHORAL SONG | 119 |
| (First song and dance in <i>Hesperides</i> , 1916) | |
| SCYROS | 121 |
| (First song of the chorus in <i>Achilles in Scyros</i> , 1917) | |
| NEPHE'S SONG | 122 |
| (From the Third Act of <i>The Sons of Jacob</i> , 1912) | |
| HYMN | 123 |
| (Closing hymn in <i>The Sons of Jacob</i>) | |
| THE ATHENIAN'S VISION | 127 |
| (Prologue to Greek Sacrificial Procession at the opening exercises of the California State Farmer's Institute in the Greek Theatre, 1904) | |
| GREETING | 135 |
| (Programme for the <i>Eumenides</i> of Aeschylus, presented in Greek by students of the University of California in the Greek Theatre, 1907) | |
| SYMPOSIUM METRICUM, 1878 | 139 |

Hylethen

A LYRICAL MISSIVE

SCHEME

| | | | | | PAGES |
|----------|---|---|---|---|--------|
| PROLOGUE | . | . | . | . | 1 -- 4 |
| PAEAN . | . | . | . | . | 5 -- 9 |
| STEPHANE | . | . | . | . | 10-23 |
| STEMMA | . | . | . | . | 24-31 |
| EPILOGUE | . | . | . | . | 32, 33 |

To

H. H. C.

From the Forest, when we speak,
Sounds *Hylêthen* in the Greek;

But the promptings fine,
That upon the soul (*we* know)
From the forest subtly flow,
No ancient might divine.

Hylethen

ALL too swiftly to its end
That soft summer eve, sweet friend,
Sank behind us. We,
Half round in our saddles turn'd,
Where its dying splendors burn'd,
Gazed regretfully ;
Half, adown the hedge-crown'd hill,
Wistful, would press forward still—
But a warning star
Glimmer'd in the deepening blue ;
Quench'd the changeful flush, that threw,
Feebly mirror'd, far
Backward its faint borrow'd glow.
Then we, silently and slow,
Took our backward way.
Toward night-woven leaf and limb,
Broider'd on the pale gold rim
Of the vanish'd day,
Through moist fragrant air, we rode.
On the bridle-hand, now, flow'd
The dim-spreading stream ;
Stole now, gently voiceful, o'er
Our grave silence. But, before,
When, in a sunny dream

HYLETHEN

Of young pleasure, we sprang forth,
Spurning the firm rain-wash'd earth
Under iron-shod feet;
Then, our mutual voices drown'd
That low lakeward-murmuring sound.
Then, the briar-rose sweet
Beckon'd, with her winsome smile,
(Hid her treacherous thorn the while);
And the green roadway,
Each new darkling turn it took,
Show'd of fairy-land a nook
Wreathed in forest spray—
Tempting, part sun-pierced, part gloom.
Each emerging height we clomb,
Whence anew the fair
Afternoon horizon crept
(From the distance where it slept)
O'er the vision, there,
On its drowsy quivering line,
Cloud-indented, seem'd to shine
Spire and citadel
Of some blissful region, blent
In hues of eld and orient.—

HYLETHEN

Thus, till night dews fell
And the star its warning sped,
We, dear friend, unweariëd
In sweet colloquy;
As the day, serene; its mood
Strong, our fancy to delude;
Would the thought put by
Of the parting that impended,
Of all, that with that last eve ended

HYLETHEN

Not by the sunlit hour
 Be my farewell spoken!
Not, when on brake and bower
 Day beams unbroken!
Not with the throstle's glee;
Not, while the brown wild-bee
 In honey'd ecstasy
Probes the unfolded flower!

But, when the lull'd redbreast
 No more his serenading
Pipes to the crimson west,
 Fast in sable fading;
After the pale primrose,
Her chalice fain to close,
Slumbers in chaste repose;
 And the night wind, sighing
Like a wandering spirit lone,
In plaintive undertone
 To leafy tongues replying
Some troubled tale would tell,
Then would I say farewell—
 All its implying,
With weird re-whisper'd spell:
Farewell—Farewell.

HYLETHEN

BLEST be the years!—that, reaper-like,
sure-bladed,

Do store and make, the while they seem to
mar;

Veil'd messengers, whose tones, all sorrow-
shaded,

Yet, to console, divinely potent are.

Low-shorn the field, wilted the tassel'd flower,
Spill'd the once brimming crystal vase may
lie:

But life and loss, time-wedded, hold their
dower

Of balm that heals, of beams that sanctify.

Soonest for him, who, of all breath and being,
Of all-in-all, but feels himself a part;
And, from frail transient ties his pulses freeing,
Lies closest to the universal heart.

His, to inform, to inspire, a view outvying
The warm life-vision of the proud Hellene:
Not, with pure-human eye, self-deifying,
Nature through man, but man through
nature seen.

HYLETHEN

Cull we, from groves sublime, a rarer guerdon
Than on his brow the palm-crown'd ancient
wore;

Chanting, with fuller heart, a deeper burden—
To find in man not less, in nature more.

As of a wider wisdom chasten'd, humbly,
Yet with more ample and profounder voice,
To swell no hamlet-hymn'd *io triumphe*,
But, to the nations, Χαίρετε, REJOICE!

Rejoice to live, each spirit-sharing creature;
Make green the waste of intellect jejune;
Reflect Earth's every life-illumined feature;
To her pure symphony your chords attune.

So, with well-measuring hand, some compen-
sation

For that she takes shall Nature give again:
From the drain'd chalice conjure reparation,
As looms the sun-limn'd Iris through the
rain.

Who knows, when finding earliest forbidden
That which is sorest craved, what recom-
pense

May for the sear'd white-calcined flesh be
hidden

In the fell furnace of experience?

HYLETHEN

Answer the wind-swept seed, by millions
wasted,
To save one tender germ-uplifting leaf;
The brief-lived fly; the myriad fruits untasted;
The stalk flung to the fire, the garner'd
sheaf.

There is no loss. The gentle child, untimely
Snatch'd from sweet mirth, all spotless, to
the tomb,
Itself wept not; the claims it touch'd sublimely
Of those that stay or follow. So, from that
gloom,

For us, through storms of selfish thought combated,
Shines a redeeming light, unseen before:
It, to the sun-ascending pile hath added
Of Peace, the many-mansion'd, one stone
more.

On the slow way, where many a shadow hovers,
Darkening, deluding, deem him happy thrice
To whom, full soon, some heaven-sent hand discovers
The late-learn'd benison of sacrifice.

HYLETHEN

The woman to the man. Endued more gently;
Younger in years, yet surer of their worth;
Whose firm maieutic touch beneficently
Guides the clogg'd spirit to its fairer birth.

Thus, the life-realm through, opposites in-
wreathing,
Then first springs an ensphered and perfect
whole,
When the sublime succumbs, intense and
seething,
To the calm beautiful, its antipole.

Ay, beautiful and faithful! Not with reasons,
Weigh'd in cold thought: but with high
hopes, that lead
By beacon flames, straight-tending, as the
seasons,
One to another, immutable, succeed.

So, summer-wing'd, to me, as, love-led, follow
(Truest of friends), sure-pinion'd, to their
homes
Dove mothers, or the zephyr-mated swallow
Speeds to his clime, your fond true greeting
comes.

HYLETHEN

A tress of fern, mid mindful words enfolded;
Pendants of unforgotten columbine:
Frail earthly types, by loving fingers moulded
To emblems of a constancy divine.

Now, therefore, in due turn, while yet un-
broken

Hangs the link'd heart-chain these mute years
along,

Let this unprison'd voice their wealth be-
token—

My late thank-offering of sincerest song,

That, on a dream-sown, motley life-path weav-
ing,

I send you, like some dark-leaved coronal,
Starr'd with pale blossoms. Even so believing,
Read mingled requiem and madrigal.

HYLETHEN

AY, think anon
Of wreathed-laid tables at a bridal feast,
Under soft-glowing lamps: with smilax winding

Its waxen tracery hither and thither, between
Wine-cup and silver flagon; fruits heap'd high
In mellow pyramids; and many a vase
Clasping white lilies, or, with fresh-clipt stem,
Roses, deep-hued, that cannot choose but pour
Their rich defloured fragrance on the warm
Silk-shaded air. Forth are the banqueters,
Refresh'd, in gay dance-measures to renew
The night-spiced revelry. But a fair young
guest,

Lingering by chance there thoughtfully alone,
Would from the relinquish'd board lift a green
spray

And pin to her bosom—when, through the
corridors,

Fine strains of dulcet strings came stealing,
and touch'd

A vibrant chord in her pure heart. Spell-
bound

By that sweet marriage-music, thrill'd she
stood,

With parted lips, one hand uplifted; and her
eyes

HYLETHEN

Seem'd not to see what met them, but through
all,

In dreamy thought, to gaze toward some far
land,

Unvisited, unknown.—Her then the poet
Mark'd, himself, too, midway tarrying, where
By the half-open door her white robe shone;
And, in his fancy, above the mirthful crowd
Soaring apart, with swift words did essay
To paint her reverie.

HYLETHEN

I look'd on a brimming fountain,
With its waters upwelling for aye:
They were black in the shadow of even;
They were bright in the lustre of day.

Not a flower by its margent mirror'd,
But with fairest petal smiled;
Not a bird 'neath the verdure, but warbled
His fondest carol wild.

Each wind to his silent hollow
Had sped, with a murmur low;
While the wrinkled hill-tops glimmer'd
In the sleepy noonday glow.

A maiden knelt, with a ewer,
From the limpid source to fill,
And its depths they were strong to woo her,
That she gazed with a transport still.

From the thirsty forest-mazes
A chase-worn huntsman came;
But drank not—for the spell beguiled him,
Of a rapture he could not name.

And they seem'd to wait and to wonder
If their vision should vanish away,
As I look'd on the brimming fountain,
With its waters upwelling for aye.

HYLETHEN

In such words did the poet
Portray the vision of the fair young guest—
Her vision and his own. For, from that hour,
Round her bright image his warm fancy moved,
As moves Orion round the Cynosure.
Not of the earth she seem'd: so radiant
Was her clear forehead; such ethereal glory
Stream'd from the sunny halo of her hair.
Yet in her nature fain would he discern
Much, to his own congenial. Not, indeed,
The questioning intellect; but a kindred soul,
Thrilling with pure emotions. Framed for love;
Love tender, deep, and inexhaustible
As a perennial rivulet, that hides
Its source from the long sultry plains its waters,
In the cool shadow of eternal hills.
This the years show'd him. Now, he but
divined
Its subtile sympathies; and, by their breath
Inspired, in fervent choriambes gave voice
To his exalted mood.

HYLETHEN

Child of the skies,
Maid,—as thou art;
Star of mine eyes,
Heaven of my heart:

Draw thou but near,
All, all is light!
But disappear,—
Lo, it is night!

Day binds a gem
Over Night's brow
(My diadem,
Beauty, art thou);

And, when he hides
Love's sign away,
Twilight abides,
Saved of its ray.

So come thy smile
Oft, as my dawn:
Light me the while
Thoughts of thee gone.

Star of mine eyes,
Heaven of my heart:
Fair as the skies,
Maiden, thou art.

HYLETHEN

Celestial forms
Did to their mortal worshipers, of old,
Descend. As when, to Latmos' stilly slopes,
The pale moon-goddess, from her heavenly home,
In waves of rippling phosphor glided down
And kiss'd Endymion's slumber-shaded cheek.
With us abide, not differently (though them-
selves
Unknowing, and unknown, the while they
stay),
Spirits of light, sometime, along this wayfare,
That in abysmal mystery began,
And tends we know not whither. But, anon,
Their gracious mission once fulfill'd, they must
Return, to prove that they were lent, not given.
Thus was the poet taught (what he, ofttimes,
As of mere human texture, would forget),
When helpless on the farther verge he stood.—
Not till long after could he pen the scene,
That they might read and profit by its lore
Who need the lesson.

HYLETHEN

Watch and wait, with bated breath;
'T is the border-land of death.

See, upon her upturn'd eyes
A strange outward dimness lies;

For, within they seek a light
Hidden from our grosser sight.

Our hush'd voices she hears not:
Rapt is all her spirit-thought,

Harkening, how it may respond
To the summons from beyond.

O! if in other spheres there be
A supernal harmony,

Breathed to hovering souls, that list
Under skies of amethyst,

She but aspires now to turn
The terrestrial sojourn

Into something of the same
As with her life earthward came.—

Yes, the trembling breath has past:
That faint-drawn sigh was the last.—

HYLETHEN

Such release kind Nature brings
When the sun-born insect springs

To new, bright-wing'd fields of bliss,
Fluttering from the chrysalis.

But, as in the wreathed sea-shell
A far echo seems to dwell,

Of some solemn wave-lapt shore,
Caught and held for evermore,

So I know that I shall hear
That sigh, in my mindful ear,

Till I, too, am call'd to stand
On the mystic border-land.

HYLETHEN

First in after years,
When the long arrow-flight of time had
 spann'd
The middle distance, found he a new strength,
The warning of those moments to record.
For then, when freshly that slight form was
 laid,
To share the slumbers of the silent dead,
Under chill snow not whiter than her face,
Rose, mingled with the vacant agony
And pang of absence, a strange fear, lest he
Had not done well his part; not at each time
Touch'd the right chord. No thoughts, no
 phantasies
Came at behest: but uninvoked, unbidden,
Sang the death-minstrel, with infernal choir,
Shrilling, as wolves howl by the wintry edge
Of Ural wildernesses.—'T were enough
To bide, firm-lipp'd, till the fell pack, out-
 wearied,
Slink into silence.—Comes the gray dawn first,
Haunted by lingering voices of the night;
Then, through its vapors, one warm beam, that
 wakes
Old memories and new purpose.

HYLETHEN

Methought I stood by a mountain grand,
And the sea crept up to its flinty strand.

I heard no sound in that region lone
But the waves and their weary monotone.

The mountain moved, as it were in sleep,
And stirr'd the waters of all the deep;

And a surge swang mightily to and fro,
And now rose louder, and now sank low.

Then floated the ringing tones between
Of a lyre, swept by a hand unseen.

Sweet and solemn they seem'd to glide
From caverns dark in the mountain-side,

Till the billows ceased to beat at the shore,
And wearily murmur'd the waves, as before.

But long in my ear an echo rang
Of the throe, and the surge, and the lyre's
 clang.

HYLETHEN

Immortal poesy!

The music of life's morning—when the child
seer

Stands by the shore, clear-eyed; and, gazing
toward

The sun-fed sources of his being, hearkens
To faint Aeolian melodies, that float

Over green waters from the gates of pearl.

All-searching language of the soul; to all
Tongues common; from all bosoms breathed,
that nigh

To the wellsprings of mystery have lain,
Nilus, Dodona, or Gethsemane.

Utter'd, not to the sense-bound hearing, but,
Through avenues of the spirit, to that ear
Which, like the hermit's door, welcomes, un-
barr'd,

Herald or foot-worn pilgrim or scarr'd slave.
What else but the weird star-link'd talisman
Of charity and beauty, heaven-born song,
Threading this clogg'd and travail-crust'd so-
journ

From youth to age, as veins of purest gold
Thread the black earth, enlocks the charm'd ring
Of many-hued experience—till the man,
In all simplicity and meekness, stands
Where stood the child: over still waters hear-
ing

The zephyr-wafted curfew-tones of peace;

HYLETHEN

Seeing, direct, near, and immediate,
That truth which labor'd learning only hides.
There, now once more, the slumbrous images
Of past and future, in one mirror merged,
On fancy's argent stream roll by,
Delighting, not deluding.

HYLETHEN

Out in the wild, witching forest
Lone and uncumber'd to lie,
Stretch'd where the pines that are tallest
Stem the blue tide of the sky.

Fragrances rare, terebinthine,
Float o'er the cone-sprinkled sward,
Far through the vague labyrinthine
Mazes of memory pour'd.

Only the loon's ghostly laughter
Breaks from the forest-bound mere:
Chimes of some mystic hereafter,
Borne on the spell-haunted ear.

Wraiths of yon fathomless azure,
Cloud-rack to cloud-castle rear'd,
Bid these fond fancies soar, as your
Shapes evanescent and weird.

There, where the pine-tops are sailing,
Black-fringed, ethereal; hung
Mid fleecy filaments, veiling
Elfin forms, phantasy-sprung—

There, what bright visage, benignly
Sad, on my rapt vision beams?
Soul to soul, upborne divinely
Into the cloud-world of dreams!

HYLETHEN

What though with day-dream be blended
Bliss quench'd in night long ago,
If, till the reverie 's ended,
Blithely the dream-measures flow!

Lone, without comrade to cumber,
In the wild forest to lie,
Where tall pines, tempting to slumber,
Stem the blue tide of the sky.

HYLETHEN

TAKE, then, dear friend, your crown—
word-woven: not
Like Ariadna's, in the firmament
Of spacious heaven with starry gems en-
wrought;
Once to her brow from fervid Orient
Divinely press'd: but in plain token sent
Of kind remembrance, from the fruited
glades
Hemming a new, Hesperian continent,
Rock-ridged; whose morn the snow-clad
shoulder shades,
Whose eve o'er azure seas in golden pallor
fades.

HYLETHEN

Here, from hill caverns sweeping sands of
gold,

Wide flashing streams their westward
courses wind,

Profuser than to Lydian kings of old

The famed Pactolus bore: with margent
lined

By fields of bearded grain, whose reapers
bind

World-sheaves of plenty; or flowing, now
between

Fruit lands of shell or berry or citrus
kind,

Or the gray olive; now mid vine-slopes
seen,

Hiding pink clusters bathed in leafy rills of
green.

HYLETHEN

Full long the unfailing South her genial
rains
Pours over dale and upland, to renew,
For pastured flocks no brumal fold re-
strains,
Fresh sustenance the verdant winter
through;
And, for delighted eyes, the varied hue
Of verdure-mingled bloom—white solo-
mon-seal,
Orange of poppy, and faint myrtle-blue:
Which fanning, through light and shade,
with sprite-like zeal,
Their soft invisible way the searching sea-winds
steal.

HYLETHEN

Sprite-like below: but, on each ridgy
height,

The foam-born children of the giant West,
Rushing resistless in untrammel'd might
Of whistling glee! Down to her shelter'd
nest

Flees the high-soaring hawk. Their toil-
some quest

Eager-eyed hunter and rude muleteer
Bend breathless down: behind the airy
crest

The steep, still trail pursuing, oak-edged—
near

Rattle of basking snake and plunge of startled
deer.

HYLETHEN

Mutters the black ravine with echoes
hoarse
And muffled, where dense-fallen boulders
meet
The hurrying stream, that, from its snowy
source,
Descends persistent. Here, with shuffling
feet,
From ledge to ledge, moves Bruin, his grim
retreat
Wary to cover. Here, the mountain quail
Chants through the gloom. But one lone
sunbeam sweet
Glints on the darting salmon's rainbow
scale,
Where strives the crystal tide toward welkin
and toward vale.

HYLETHEN

Strives nobly! What scenes for faltering
pen to trace,
In that Titanic valley, whose sheer sides
Drop from mid-heaven to the shadowy
base
Of Earth, low-rifted! There the Ice-king
bides
His thousand years of slumbering strength,
and hides
Under blue sheen the sure footfalls, that
merge
In Time's unswerving pathway; whilst his
guides,
Colossal peaks, in frowning silence, urge
The blind obedient waters, over the dizzy
verge,

HYLETHEN

To their mad leap!—Yet is there might to
save

That vapory ruin, with all-gathering hand,
In fresh, redoubled potency to lave
The temples of a wonder-teeming land.
Set on its brow, in serrate order grand,
Linking the present to a buried past
Of growths primeval, green and ageless,
stand

Redwood and huge sequoia. They, the
last

Of their majestic kind: and, with them, failing
fast,

HYLETHEN

Too many a source of balm. No longer toll
For holy men (who sought no golden
fleece,
But to sow wide their mission of the soul)
Anthem and angelus—where, in calm re-
lease
From fever'd life, they till'd its rich sur-
cease.
Perchance, like theirs, might our free
fancy stray
O'er the far-arching ocean, named of
Peace,
Past yon white sea-bird rock'd in briny
spray,
On the swift wing of thought, to Nippon and
Cathay.

HYLETHEN

FANCY free!—So deem the mind,
That no chains of memory bind
To some foreland fair
Of the dim receding shore;
That no anchor flings before,
Caught with gossamer
To some hope, deep-glimmering through
Each wave-wrinkled roadstead new.
Who no melody
Of enchanted music hears,
Echoed down the steadying years;
Nor, of quick-stirr'd heart,
Fresh enravishment can feel,
Let him rove, with veering keel:
Let him swing apart;
Drifting on a starless sea,
Calm-beholden, fancy free.

And who!—at the cost
Of a cold and blunted sense;
In a vague indifference
To that sadness lost
Which, by unrelenting laws,
Every thing of beauty draws
In its silken train,—
Who forsooth, would ask relieve!—

HYLETHEN

Or the mesh of fate unweave—
Not to stand again
Near the torrent-laved lake-side,
Watch the foam-fleck'd water glide,
Hear the low refrain
Murmur'd by the rumbling fall.
Feign not I now to recall,
Through a childish rhyme,
What, when little children, we
(Little knowing) thought to see
In very deed: a clime,
Where nor face nor flower should fade,
Nor fount that fed the everglade
(Save that of tears) run dry;
Nor loved voices fail, between
Pale dawn and the opaline
Of the sunset sky.—
So, lest sombre strains too long
Haunt the evening of my song
With remember'd spell,
Sinking softly to its end:
Therefore, yet again, sweet friend,
Once again, farewell.



After Egypt

*Nile pater, quam possim te dicere causa
Aut quibus in terris occuluisse caput?*

After Egypt

WHO, from Piræus sailing, sees
The circlet of the Cyclades
Glide fast backward, till they shine
No more, for him the southward line,
Drawn where sky and water meet
Between Carpathos and Crete,
Points to Egypt. On a day
Of a bygone century
Thus from his native Attic shore
A far-speeding vessel bore
The good Aristo's son—the same
Who, through the ages, by the name
Of Plato should remember'd be.
Young, then, and unrenown'd was he,
Nor himself knowing; but possess
By that foreboding and unrest
Of mystic aspiration bred.
Wealth and fair ancestry had shed
On him their lustre; nature brought
Delight of sense and soaring thought,
Blent in such visions as inspire
The poet's fervor and desire.
Now, with a full, sore-troubled heart,
Fain would he spurn the seething mart,

AFTER EGYPT

The civic clamor, the revelry,
Even the groves, the hills, the sky
Of haughty Athens. Who were they!
Those flippant arbiters of wit
And song and eloquence, to sit
In judgment on a life sublime,
Which, round the peristyle of time,
Should waken echoes more profound
Than all their shallow arts could sound.
Nathless, perforce of their decrees,
The mortal voice of Socrates
Was hush'd—though in the charm'd ear
Of each true friend and follower
Still did its golden accents seem
To ring, and, like a haunting dream,
Before each mindful eye the spell
Of the sad final scene to dwell:
The cot-bed in the prison, the chain,
The benign master—and the bane
Quaff'd from the deadly chalice.—Now
On that blithe ship, whose eager prow
Churn'd the blue waters, Plato stood,
Lost in the vague expectant mood
Of one, whom, for the ends of fate,
Fresh scenes and trials new await.

Peaceful and sweet it seem'd, to stand
In the quaint three-corner'd land,
That the seven streams of Nile enfold;

AFTER EGYPT

Where the Argive maid, of old,
Io, poor wanderer from the West,
Bent her life-weary limbs to rest.
Sweet was it, when a cooling shade
The hand of welcome eve had laid
Over the river's bosom, to lie
Watching the fretted shore glide by;
Or some pale lotus-lily's face
Under the dim starlight to trace,
Whilst softly the Nile boatmen plied
Their blades athwart the placid tide.—
Soon Memphis, and the voiceful throng,
Swaying its temple courts along,
Of Apis-worshippers; and, seen
Afar, the pyramids, whose mien
Divinely, to the musing Greek,
Of space and number seem'd to speak,
Problems Pythagorean.—Again
Away, past ibis-haunted fen,
On, on, still on, by wind and oar,
Stemming the soft, rich waves, that pour
Forth from perennial founts unseen
Sweet freshness o'er the margents green
'Twixt Araby's purple mountains and
Brown hills that bar the Libyan sand:
Up, up the immemorial stream.—
Now, on its shadowy surface beam
Gay colonnade and shimmering wall,
The hundred-gated capital,—

AFTER EGYPT

And at each gate, to battle-rout,
Two-hundred chariots sally out,—
Thebes, ancient seat of warrior kings.
Here, where colossal Memnon flings
Weird music on the morning air,
Teeming with busy life; but there,
Toward sunset and the nether gloom,
Dear to the dwellers of the tomb,
By their frail caskets tenanted,
Stretches the City of the Dead,
Sombre and silent—save what note
Of lamentation deep might float,
From mourners' voices wafted. There
Glides many a funeral bark, to bear,
Westward and earthward voyaging,
On the last voyage, the bodies of them
Whose souls, or must return and strive
Through more of mortal penance, or live,
In Osiris merged, the all-
Blissful existence, all-in-all.

Nigh to its end the sojourn drew,
As fast the wondering moments flew,
Which, by tradition's testament,
Young Plato in old Egypt spent.
To-morrow would he set his face
Northward, and the steps retrace,
That from known scenes had led him far.

AFTER EGYPT

To-morrow, with the morning star,
Cyrene and fair Sicily
The traveler's cynosure should be;
Then great Hesperia, and anon
The harbors of his Attic home.—
That night, when sleep his lids had seal'd,
Unto the spirit was reveal'd
The vision of a dream. Him thought,
By throes of anxious quest distraught,
To wander near the Nubian tract,
Above the second cataract,
Where the eternal waters cold
Down from the Bybline mountains roll'd;
And there, while thrill'd that region lone
With an unearthly monotone,
Forth, in ethereal hues, did gleam,
As through a halo of his stream,
The countenance of Father Nile.
No accident of frown or smile
Ruffled his features' calm. Nor youth,
Nor age was mirror'd there; nor ruth,
Nor joy, nor sorrow, as of a sense
Of past or future, lower'd thence.
'T was as the Sphinx re-voiced, or note
Breathed from a midnight Memnon's
throat,
When, through the gates of dreams, this
word,
Parting those lips sublime, was heard.

AFTER EGYPT

- “ Ye search amain, to probe and win
My secret and my origin.
- “ Caught in the mesh of time and space,
Ye pass me, and see not my face.
- “ To phantom shapes ye cleave, that range
Along the rifts of chance and change.
- “ Ye feign, the signs to comprehend
Of a beginning and an end.
- “ Know, that each drop of crystal dew,
Which, to its mission born anew
- “ And from inept admixture freed,
My farthest fountains helps to feed,
- “ The same once mantled in the grape,
Or swell'd the millet or the rape,
- “ Or clove the Delta, and, wave-tost,
In gray infinitude was lost.

AFTER EGYPT

- “ Son of unworthy Athens, lo,
Thus, darkly, to thy thoughts I show
- “ What mysteries through thee, in turn,
Men of the Western world shall learn,
- “ When, in thy magic name, they pledge
The wise soul's heavenly privilege,
- “ Turning from that which *seems* to be,
The fleeting show, the vanity,
- “ To penetrate, clear-eyed, beneath
These cerements of life and death,
- “ And the *ideal* truth compel
From its gross perishable shell.”



The Star-Gazer

*Tu ne quaesieris (scire nefas) quem mihi, quem
tibi
Finem di dederint.*

The Star-Gazer

MARK yon pale segment of the sky
Where glows Aldebaran,
Dim starry myriads marshall'd nigh,
His Hyads in the van.
Their solemn arbiter of old,
Still from his beacon fall
The fateful ruddy fires that hold
A thousand worlds in thrall.

Nathless, no star nor satellite,
No galaxy of suns,
Strewing vague splendor o'er the night,
Where its weird circle runs,
Avails with changeful orb to move
One jot or tittle fine
Of aught, fair youth, that doth behoove
My destiny or thine.

Thy fortunes in their signs were writ,
Those signs are writ in thee,
As when some pharos-tower has lit
Its image in the sea.
Prefigured shone this bloodless hand,
This beard, these sunken eyes,
Ere yet Chaldean shepherds scann'd
The dial of the skies.

THE STAR-GAZER

Change, there is none. Thou wouldst achieve
The future—hold the clew,
Old threads unwinding, thence to weave
A fabric of the New.
Deem now the subtler wisdom his,
Who seeks not, falteringly,
What “was” or “will be,” but what *is*
And *shall* forever be.

What though a fitful languor blears
Dread Algol’s gleaming eye?
What though the pole-star reels and veers,
Bending in sure reply
To the slow-nodding Earth, ordain’d
To touch and turn once more
The goal her slanted globe has gain’d
Ten-thousand times before.

Nay, ask me me not what issue waits
Thy venturous design.
Tempt not the silence of the Fates;
Nor, vaunting to untwine
With hand untimely their coil’d skein,
The blameless stars belie,
Call’d in the ambient sphere to reign
Thy natal hour foreby.

THE STAR-GAZER

But tarry rather, whilst I trace
The scant and simple lines
Of a life-picture, that with grace
Of no proud emblem shines ;
Not in vain lowliness conceived,
Nor lofty passion's glow,
But, like the inland mere, unheaved
By pangs of ebb and flow.

An only child was I ; and one
Of lonely temper—prone
The boisterous merry throng to shun,
And ramble forth alone ;
Sometime, high clambering to explore
Paths of the still, dark wood
That frown'd down, where, hard by the shore,
My mother's cottage stood.

Yet, near the sea-bank's shelving sand,
By swallows thriddled, best
I loved to linger, on the strand
Wave-wash'd, in childish quest
Of shells and stones and seaweeds bright ;
Glancing, betimes, away
To watch some white-wing'd vessel's flight
Forth from the inner bay.

THE STAR-GAZER

Such eve as waits on brumal days
 Whose calm no cloudlet mars
First won my rapt and curious gaze
 To this black night of stars.
Sharp was their glitter; and methought
 They pierced the frosty air
In stern, sad admonition, fraught
 With penance or despair.

I learn'd to know them. For there dwelt,
 Yet farther from the town
Than we, beyond the brook and belt
 Of pine-trees straggling down
Shoreward, with granite boulders lined,
 A hermit old and gray,
By children dreaded. He divined,
 When near his cell to stray

Chance wanderings led me, my grave mood
 And meditative bent.—
Rare hours, as with a grandsire good,
 By that rude hearth I spent.
Wise proverbs held he, in full store,
 Tales and quaint histories;
And secrets of supernal lore,
 Unshared of men, were his.

THE STAR-GAZER

What powers the fickle moon constrain,
The hermit show'd me; what
Portents to terrors dire pertain,
By pest or famine brought.
Much, so in pious order said,
I heard and ponder'd well;
Yet, in his great black book I read
More than he wist to tell.

There, on its dingy pages wide,
Lay spread the astral sphere,
Which thrice-four ruling Signs divide,
Twelve Houses of the year;
While constellated figures strange
Haunt each his native zone,
Some toward the zenith wont to range,
Some to the nadir known.

And what I learn'd I taught again.
Deem not, sir stranger, those
Who on still paths aloof from men
Seeming to wander, close
Their gates to the dull fatuous herd—
Deem not the anchoret
A pity-sever'd soul, unstirr'd
By fondness and regret;

THE STAR-GAZER

Nor that true thoughts, whose force hath swell'd
Springs of the pensive heart,
Till by rich overflow compell'd
Its burthen to impart,
Shall fail their blessing to convey,
With message vainly sped,
Though a child finger point the way,
And childish steps be led.

To a near neighbor's fostering care
A shipwreck'd man consign'd
(So his crush'd fortunes to repair
And in due season find
The dear pledge biding its true claim)
A little daughter. She
Scarce eight years reckon'd to her name,
Eleven were past for me.

Comrades we proved. No outer mark
Did of like mien appear,
To bind us. Her great eyes were dark,
Her brow shone swarthy-clear.
But a mysterious concord rare
Of query and reply—
Of mingled faith and wonder there;
Here, of wise ministry.

THE STAR-GAZER

Oft, by the tide-worn marge, serene
Still afternoons, heart-free,
After the closed school, now between
Gray crag and whispering sea
We roved, now on the pebbly sand
At the wet edge stoop'd; fain
The crab to capture, or lay quick hand
(Dash'd with the briny rain)

Upon small silvery fishes, flung
Danger'd or past restore,
To gasp and leap and quiver among
Strange mates of the dry shore.
I told her how the frolic brood
Their fierce foe fail to heed,
Then in mad sudden flight pursued
To shallow refuge speed.

When autumn round the northern wave
Night's mantle earlier threw,
What time no gairish moonbeams drave
The weakling stars from view,
We, some hour (while below our feet
My nested swallows slept),
From the tall sea-bank's beetling seat
Watch'd the slow Wain, that swept

THE STAR-GAZER

Low-wheeling past the watery verge,
Cloud-blended, threatful; yet
Not once by that wild, darkling surge
Are its bright axles wet.
I show'd her there the pointers twain,
Which to the lodestar lead,
Whereof, her lost course to regain,
Each errant bark hath need.

Then, why the polar tract inclines
With tilted shaft, I tried
To show; and named the potent Signs,
Some here at harvest-tide,
Some missing.—She turn'd, wonderingly,
And faintly smiled, at tale
Of crabs and fishes in the sky.
I said: "No ship shall sail

"Your farthest ocean, nor even a bird
Skim the wide billowy waste,
But fateful planets erst concurr'd
Thereto, with sure stars placed
In dominant conjunction. So
'T is in wise books writ plain—
What ancient men, mindful to know,
Solved, searching. Look again,

THE STAR-GAZER

“Where yonder huddling swarm, apart
From their star comrades flown,
Upward with light wings seems to dart—
As ‘Seven Sisters’ known.
Six only though we now behold,
Another in sooth there is,
Seen sometime, sometime gone. Of old,
Dove children, Pleiades,

“Men call’d them: which fond daughters true,
Once harvest-toils begun,
Straight with ungarner’d shreds upflew,
Their father’s cheer. But one,
As oft betwixt white cliffs they sped,
Each time was sunder’d far,—
That lost one.” Myra laugh’d and said,
“*I am the seventh star.*”

Came winter; and, flowery spring withal
From Myra’s sire had come
Tidings and token and the call
To her far foreign home.
All freighted the tall vessel lay,
And would, from the quay-side,
Drop seaward to the outer bay
With the late-ebbing tide.

THE STAR-GAZER

Then straight, as she her cable slipt
And the huge hull began
To move, I, where the hill-ridge dipt,
Back by the cross-path ran
Homeward, and with expectant gaze
Stood on our bank once more.
Soon her black mast-tips I saw graze
The sky-line, where the shore

Sloped to the harbor bar. And now
She glided forth full-seen;
And the fresh breeze athwart her bow
Catching, I saw her lean
And shiver, with cross-haul'd topsails lit
By evening's roseate glow
Fading behind me. Bathed in it,
Through purple waters, slow

But steadily the good ship clove
A northward furrow, until,
Hid by the rocks at Hermit's Grove,
I lost her:—watching still;
For, tacking easterly, anon,
With her ship's light hove high,
In the wide offing, pale and wan,
Those sails I could descry.

THE STAR-GAZER

But to one formless spark they seem'd
 To shrink, which, with the sea
Commingling, fainter and fainter gleam'd;
 Spread and swam mistily;
Then, like a firefly's baffling trace
 That on some dewy lawn
At nightfall sportive children chase,
 Glimmer'd once—and was gone.

As in a dream I turn'd. Some tinge
 Of the day's vanish'd fire
Did the hill-edged horizon fringe
 With dappled crests. And higher,
Yet sunward leaning, the soft-named
 Planet, from heavenly seat
Her vesper sovereignty proclaim'd
 With silvery visage sweet.

So to their orbits true those spheres
 Celestial meet and move;
Which I, thenceforward, through the years
 By comradeship should prove
Steadfast and guileless. For, all zest
 Of boyish pastime stale,
And my good mother to her rest
 Now taken, her pittance frail

THE STAR-GAZER

Falling to me—enough for bread,—
 What reck'd I, so, with men
To walk, if the weird paths to tread,
 To know each denizen,
Of infinite heaven I might essay?
 Nor hath slow age yet learn'd,
Here in my silent tower (what way
 Thy steps to-night have turn'd),

To cease or lose or spurn the lore
 Through this true glass read clear.
Men say, forsooth, Who at my door
 Entereth and shall hear
Response of mine, he can assure
 The hopes of his emprise,
Or, by sage prescience, work cure
 Of treacherous maladies.

And they believe not, when I ask,
 What profits it, at noon
To call night's revel and unmask
 The spectral guests too soon?—
The "future" ye feign *is—is now*;
 Nor, when in hour condign
Led forth as present, doth its brow
 With borrow'd graces shine.

The Isle of Circe

— ἢ θεὸς ἢ γυνή.

The Isle of Circe

AY, well may moisten'd eyes with pity
glisten,

Great king and gracious queen and feasters
all,

Whilst by the night-fed fagot-flame ye listen
To woes your sovereign pleasure would recall.

Weary our hands, as through slow hours they
wielded

The long tough oar-sweeps past gray rings of
foam ;

Weary our hearts, whereto no beacon yielded
Or glimmering hope or semblance frail of
home.

Rather, full oft to mourn, while strange waves
cleaving,

True comrades by wild men and monsters
slain :

Their souls bespoke to peace ; their poor bones
leaving

Blanch'd on hot sands or rotting in the rain.

Remain'd one ship, and shipmates fifty drove
her

Unrestingly, that day, till eventide,

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

When, as the sudden moon's full beam broke
over

The sea's far edge, a shining shore I spied.

I prest the helm, sign'd for smart stroke; and,
swinging

Across low glittering surf-crests toward the
land,

She, like a straight-flung goat-spear, forward
springing

Leapt a half keel-length up the hard white
sand.

Silent we supp'd; yet could no caution banish
That slumber to limb-weary mortals due
When at the gates of dreams their sorrows
vanish

And with the wakening sun-god rise anew.

So, by the mottled dawn, ere the stern giver
Of light and labors the pale sleepers smote,
Myself stood up, and seizing bow and quiver
Clomb to a bare-peak'd hillock, thence to note

What region haply held us. An island, lowly
Set in the azure waves, I saw: its rim
More bare, with woody folds upswelling slowly,
Like a boss'd shield, to a green centre dim.

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

Whence, from that midway bower, ere yet I
tended

With the first sun-shaft downward, to relate
These prospects view'd, at once quick *smoke*
ascended

Coiling. Which thrill'd me when I saw, and
straight

I thought to go and prove: stay'd then to ponder—

Might it not profit, rest or feast to-day,
To-morrow send some questioning band forth
yonder?

And the Luck-bringer help'd; for in my way,

Soon half retraced, an antler'd deer stoop'd
drinking

Where a spring widen'd. His bent neck, seen
true,

A hurtling arrow pierced. With hoarse moan
sinking

Limp at the weedy marge he lay. I drew

Quickly my blade, cut short his strife, firm
fasten'd

The hooves by withes together, my quarry
slung

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

Shoulderwise; and, with steps by burthen
hasten'd,
Before my glad mates the huge prize I flung.

“Courage!” I cried; “not yet the Stygian ferry
“Shall claim our crossing, sorrow-spent withal.
“There ’s drink aboard; here ’s other cheer; wax
merry;
“Be one day named Sea-wanderers’ Festival!”

And, to obey not slow, in rightful order
All services they wrought; the wine-jars tapt;
And drank and ate and laugh’d, till eve the
border
Of that round isle in drowsy slumber wrapt.

But at cool morn, in council call’d, discreetly
My thoughts I broach’d: “Comrades, shall
any try,
“So by the belted sea begirt completely,
“Or right or left to wend, or forth to hie?

“Remains naught but the *quest*. O’er mid-isle
hovering
“Smoke yestermorn from high seat I could
see.

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

“One half shall go; one half bide its discovering:

“Eurylochus guiding those; these led by me.”

So I said. But their hearts were crush'd, and
grievous

Their cries, those horrid hosts remembering
well,

Eaters of men. Yet could no tears retrieve us.
Quickly the lots we cast; and it befell

Eurylochus he should go. Sad farewells spoken,
Weeping they went, weeping we watch'd their
train

Wind hillward; wondering sore what might be-
token

That dwellers' sign, or benison or bane.—

Scarce was the sun to his mid-pathway risen,
When from the copse Eurylochus we saw
come.

Alone he crept; nor could his tongue unprison,
All grief-engross'd and with pale horror
dumb.

Not till we, in amaze and hot desire
Of tidings, him did importune and pray,

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

Found he a voice: "Up through wild brake and
brier,

"As thou didst charge, Ulysses, we held way,

"And to a mansion came, splendid and stately:

"Itself unthreatening; but by the gateway
glower'd

"Tigers and grisly wolves. Some crouch'd se-
dately

"Chap-licking; some, wagging long tails,
sprang forward,

"And their huge paws on lap or shoulders
throwing,

"Fain upon us like petted dogs to fawn,

"Seem'd with big eyes to beg and bar our going.

"But we, these passing, cross'd the court-yard
lawn;

"Then paused, as at the porch we stood, to
hearken

"What throbbings fell of a great loom's sharp
hum;

"While, where low pendent films of vine-leaf
darken

"Those fatal doors, sound of sweet song did
come,

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

“Forth swelling—and the whole air moan’d; or
human

“The voice, or of a goddess. Then of us one,

“ ‘Hark! O hark,’ cried; ‘some nymph divine or
woman

“ ‘Within doth weave and sing. Call we!’

“ ’T was done:

“They spoke and call’d. The tall doors swang
asunder;

“She came; bade enter; and in mad folly all

“(Save me who stopt suspicious) vanish’d
under

“That roof of hell, past rescue or recall.”

Eurylochus ceased.—My sword to shoulder
slinging,

Bright-bladed, keen, me straightway I bade
lead

By the same path. But at my feet, close cling-
ing,

Prone he lay, and in piteous tone did plead:

“Not thither, great Ulysses! take me not
thither!

“Thyself will ne’er return. ’T were better,
die

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

“Than as charm’d wolf or leopard pine and
wither.

“Nay, these still live; with these to ship and
fly!”

“Eurylochus, thou,” I said, “art free to tarry
“Eating and drinking by the beach’d pin-
nace here.

“But I some cure to my lost comrades carry:
“’T is stern necessity; my course lies clear.”

So saying, with swift steps my way I winded
Upward, far spurning ship and sandy shore;
Darkly the while of ancient griefs reminded,
And o’er these fresher marvels brooding sore.

And as to the grove-cinctured summit nearer
I drew, and of that island-dome grew ware,
Which, where the slanting sunbeam pierced,
seen clearer,
Gave glimpse of its enchanted portals, there

Met me a princely youth, blooming and tender—
Such grace as briefest sits on mortal head;
And straight I knew again the weird Luck-
sender.

He, my hand pressing, in low accents said:

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

“Whither now, fate-worn wanderer, thicket-
threading,

“Tendest alone in guileful region strange?

“Thy comrades yonder in foul sties now bedding

“The bristly penance pay of porcine change.

“Whom to redeem, forsooth, thou goest? Rather

“Thyself like them in swinish couch to lie!

“But lo, take thou the antidote, ere farther

“Thy rash steps mount, of Circe’s sorcery.

“When she with gracious hand the poison’d
chalice

“Proffers (which nathless quaff thou undismay’d),

“This potent herb in turn shall stay the malice

“Of those black arts, and ’neath the threatening
blade

“Of thy bare sword her proud soul quail and
cower.”

So saying, a frail plant pulling from the
ground,

He show’d me. Black its root, milk-white the
flower.

Moly its name divine; of man, scarce found.

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

The helping god was gone. Plain signs I
follow'd;

And, as I pass'd the sad-eyed monsters tame,
Of the good drug I held some portion swallow'd;
And on the moaning porch strong-hearted
came;

Nor paused to hear, but with clear voice uplifted
I call'd. She came; beneath the slumbrous
vine

Led where dim sun, through flickering shadows
sifted,
And crimson glow of shimmering walls com-
bine,

Into the bright-hued banquet-hall. All gently
On ivory throne she made me sit; fill'd high
The fragrant wine-cup (which malevolently
She had with bane infused); and her dark
eye

Beam'd with soft fervor, the fell draught com-
mending.

But when it (bane-bereft) had pass'd my
throat,
The sorceress then, the while she forward bend-
ing

With white arm raised and golden wand me
smote,

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

Did by harsh word her bosom's guile discover:

“Hence to the sty! Go join thy wallowing
mates!”

But like the cloud-spark my swift sword flash'd
over

Her pale brow and pearl-twined luxuriant
plaits

Of ebon hair. With loud shriek she sped under
My sword-arm's menace, and close clasping
cried:

“What man art thou? What mortal hath such
wonder

“Unheard-of wrought, these potions to abide?

“For never, never did other lips unlighted

“Press the drugg'd bowl, save thine. Ah yes,
't was true!

“Ulysses thou art, whose coming the sure-
sighted

“Wing'd Messenger oft warn'd me I should
rue,

“From Trojan field thy lone bark homeward
steering.—

“But sheathe, I pray, thy sword; and come
where rest

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

“The wanderer waits—with love thy sad heart
cheering

“And couch of more than mortal charms possess.”

“Fair Circe, dread enchantress, darest thou
utter

“Love’s name (I answered), whilst in noisome sty

“My hapless comrades with brute voices mutter

“The anguish bred of thy fierce contumely?

“Think’st thou this hilted blade hath foil’d all
vainly

“Those charms whose dart gods only may
repel

“(Or man *with* god), but to succumb insanely

“To the bland witchery of second spell?”

I spoke. And, with no word, her steps she
guided

Across the festal chamber’s polish’d floor
And the paved corridor whose length divided
The palace from the postern pens. Their door

Flung wide, forth rush’d the headlong swinish
rabble

(Sad souls in bristly skin and porcine mould)
Groaning and groveling with half-human babble
At the enchantress’ feet. With wand of gold

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

Poised in her firm soft hand, before them throw-
ing

A different drug--which they devour'd, she
then

Touch'd lightly each one. Straightway I saw
off flowing

Their brutal rough integuments. Again

My men they were and knew me; and each
portly

Embower'd column re-murmur'd our fond
cries,

As they clung to me and kiss'd my hands. Then
shortly

Spoke Circe: "Cease; no more of tearful eyes;

" 'T is well. Now by bright afternoon unbroken

"Speed thy way downward to the wave-
fretted strand,

"Wily Ulysses; and to thy mates take token

"Of this our bounteous cheer and helpful
hand."

Nor tarried I; but soon by that sore-hearted

Despairing company with glad mien I stood:
It was as if some father, long departed,

Had from the grave his whilom life renew'd.

THE ISLE OF CIRCE

“Refrain! refrain!” I cried; “kindles no longer
“The sullen sea-god his belated ire:
“The potions brew’d at Circe’s board flow
stronger
“Than Aeol’s blasts or dull Cyclopean fire.
“Then follow, spell-inspired; seize chance and
follow,
“Ere yonder sun-god stoops to the sapphire
lake!
“Upward, with winged feet, o’er hill and hol-
low;
“And in enchanted halls your wassail take!”

But, royal sire, the fagot-flame, to ember
Sinking apace, bids spare your patient ears.
The tale is long; nor boots it to remember
Too many woes at once of vanish’d years.

Another eve, if suiteth so thy pleasure,
Thine and the noble queen’s, I shall renew
These tasks begun: how the sure homeward
measure
Of our weird voyage immortal Circe drew;

How my ship’s crew, her warnings all unheeded,
Wander’d to death without those mystic walls,
For that their souls a subtler knowledge needed
Of the charm’d cup that heals while it en-
thralls.

Ulysses' Convoy

Finis et erroris miseri Phaeacia tellus.

Ulysses' Convoy

HIS tale was ended. But the throng
Were hush'd in silence all:
Spell-bound their speechless thoughts were
held
Throughout the shadowy hall.

Then King Alcinoüs spoke and said:

“Ulysses, since at last
“Within *my* mansion's ample gates
“Thy wandering feet have pass'd,
“Therefore, methinks, no hopes deferr'd,
“No doubts or driftings more
“Await thee, though full many and dire
“Thy sorrows heretofore.—

“But ye, my lieges, every one,
“Mark me—ye who each day
“Sit by, the council wine to quaff
“And hear the minstrel's lay:

“Pack'd for our guest the strong chest holds
“The garments, gold fine-wrought,
“And other gifts, which to my hearth
“Phaeacian nobles brought.

ULYSSES' CONVOY

“But let us give him, man for man,
“Tripod and bowl beside—
“By tithes collected we, in turn,
“Shall be indemnified.”

Thus spoke Alcinoüs; and his words
Full approbation earn'd.
They then unto their several homes
For nightly rest return'd.

But soon as rosy-finger'd dawn
Her earliest beam display'd,
Briskly they to the ship their gifts
Of shining bronze convey'd.

These in her hold the king himself,
Alcinoüs, safe bestow'd,
Where naught should hinder hand or arm
Of oarsmen, while they row'd.

Next, to their sovereign's house again,
A banquet to prepare.
A bullock to great Zeus he slew,
The cloud-wrapt Thunderer.

Choice parts in worship burn'd, themselves
To glorious feasting fell.
For them, Demodocus plied his song,
The bard they honor'd well.

ULYSSES' CONVOY

So fared they. But Ulysses oft
Sunward his glances turn'd,
In haste its setting to behold,
So for the start he yearn'd.

As when a man who all day long
Has plough'd a field, behind
Two tawny oxen, holds no thought
But *supper* in his mind;

And glad he is, when the sun dips,
To plod his weary way
Homeward, so was Ulysses glad
To note its sinking ray.

Straightway to his Phaeacian hosts,
Those lovers of the oar,
He spoke; but to the king his words
Their chiefest message bore.

“Alcinoüs, ruler of the land,
“This people's glorious head,
“Pour offerings and dismiss me now,
“By safe, sure convoy sped.

“And fare ye well. This hour brings true
“My dream of happiness:
“Convoy and gifts, all which I pray
“The gods of heaven may bless.

ULYSSES' CONVOY

“May I, home reaching, scatheless find
“True wife and all most dear;
“As may yourselves make glad your wives
“And children, tarrying here.

“Every well-being 't is my prayer
“Be yours, by heaven's behest;
“And never may mischance or bane
“On this good people rest.”

So said he; and applauding loud
They bade with one accord
To set the guest upon his way,
So righteous was his word.

Then to his herald spoke the king:
“Pontonoüs, wine to hand!
“That Father Zeus may speed our guest
“Forth to his native land.”

So through the hall each feaster's cup
Fill'd high in solemn wise,
Libation to the gods, who hold
Blest mansions in the skies,

Right where they sat they pour'd.—Then rose
Ulysses, thus the last
Speaking, as to Arête's hand
A brimming cup he pass'd.

ULYSSES' CONVOY

“With my farewell, O queen, abide
 “Rejoicing to the end;
“Unto old age and death, whose fates
 “O’er mortal men impend.

“I go; but dwell thou happy here
 “In this house, gladdening
“Thy children and the people and
 “Alcinoüs the king.”

So saying, great Ulysses cross’d
 The threshold, while the way
Shoreward a royal herald led,
 Where the swift vessel lay.

Also the queen sent maids. One bore
 Mantle and tunic fine;
Another fetch’d the well-lock’d chest;
 A third brought bread and wine.

By sea and ship arriving, straight
 All these the gallant crew
Received and stored. Then, for his bed
 On deck abaft they threw

Soft rugs and linen coverlet,
 Suited to sleep profound.
Ulysses, next, himself on board
 In silence laid him down;

ULYSSES' CONVOY

Whilst they their seats took, each with all
Well order'd to agree,
And from the punctured mooring-stone
Cast the stern-cable free.

As they, back leaning, spurn'd the brine
Abaft with bending blade,
That moment on Ulysses' eyes
The spell of sleep was laid;

Sleep of the sweetest, deathlike, deep.—
But she, as on footing dry
Four stallions, springing with one bound
Under the lash, fling high

Their heels, and swiftly scour the plain,
Even so the pinnace sprang
Stern high, and mightily behind
The purple billow sang.

Steady she ran, unswerving, sure;
Nor with her fleet emprise
Might even the wheeling falcon vie,
The swiftest bird that flies.—

Thus the swift vessel plough'd the waves,
Bearing a crafty man
Like the immortals in wise arts
Of shrewd, resourceful plan.

ULYSSES' CONVOY

Unnumber'd woes his heart had known,
By wars and wanderings taught;
But now in peaceful sleep he lay,
Those sorrows all forgot.—

What hour uprose morn's herald star,
The brightest in the sky,
That hour unto Ulysses' isle
The speeding ship drew nigh.

A bay there is, of Phorcys named,
The old man of the sea,
In Ithaca, where two jutting crags
Slope inward crouchingly.

These fend the storm-roll'd billows off
Without; and, once inside,
Boats all unanchor'd and unmoor'd
In waveless shelter ride.

There grows an olive, slender-leaved,
Hard by the harbor's head;
Near it a lovely grotto dim,
Divinely tenanted

By nymphs call'd *naiads*. Bowls and urns
Of native stone, descried
Dimly within.—Hither wild bees
Their fragrant treasure hide.—

ULYSSES' CONVOY

Tall looms of stone within, whereon
Sea purple shot with gold
The naiads weave to filmy veils,
A wonder to behold!

Pure trickling water has the grot;
And two doorways incline,
The one toward Boreas, trod by men;
The other, more divine,

Faces the South Wind. To this door
No human step draws near:
Only immortal beings know
The way to enter here.—

Into the harbor, known of old,
They drove the convoy bark;
Beach'd her a half-length on the sand
Above high-water mark.

ULYSSES' CONVOY

Then, first, Ulysses from the ship
 They lifted, bed and all,
And laid him on the sandy shore,
 By slumber held in thrall.

His goods, next, which Athena moved
 Phaeacians to bestow,
Beside the olive-tree they brought
 And set them in a row,

Well from the trodden path apart,
 Lest the wayfaring folk
Might have the picking of the pile
 Before Ulysses woke.



Agamemnon's Ruth

. nec siletur illud potentissimi regis anapaestum, qui laudat senem et fortunatum esse dicit, quod inglorius sit atque ignobilis ad supremum diem perventurus.

Agamemnon's Ruth

- A** GAM. Old man, to the front here!
Come forth.
- O. M. Forth I come.—
What new work, Agamemnon my lord?
- AGAM. Haste on.
- O. M. Here I haste.
All sleepless mine age, right watchful
of eye,
to attend thy command.
- AGAM. What star plies its way yonder?
- O. M. Sirius,
nigh to the seven-crown'd Pleiad
onrolling, in mid-heaven yet.
- AGAM. Ay, true. Not a sound,—
nor of birds nor the sea.
Full silent, each wind
his peace o'er Euripus is holding.
- O. M. But thou,
why without thy pavilion dost hie,
Agamemnon my lord?
Quiet reigns over Aulis. Not yet
stirs the watch on the wall.—
Go we in.—
- AGAM. Aged man,
I envy thy lot.

AGAMEMNON'S RUTH

That mortal I envy,
whose life-course, undanger'd,
hath sped to the end, unhonor'd, unknown.—

But the great,
them I envy not so.

O. M. Yet there
lies the beauty of life.

AGAM. But that beauty, how frail!
Sweet is honor; yet bitter, betimes,
when the times suit it not.—
Now, 't is heaven's behest, unfulfill'd,
makes havoc of life;
now, 't is man,
with his clashing opinions, works
ruin.

O. M. Nay, I cannot admire
such words spoke by one of thy lofty
estate.

Not the price
of unclouded good-cheer,
Agamemnon, paid'st thou
for Atreus as sire.

Joy is due thee—with pain,
since mortal thou art.

Though it be not *thy* choice,
yet the gods, in their pleasure,
shall order it thus.—

But now,

AGAMEMNON'S RUTH

by the lamp's ample flame,
a letter thou writest,
the same
thou still hast in hand.
Writing first, then erasing;
sealing now, now unsealing;
the tablet anon
to the earth thou dost fling,
the big tear forth-welling meanwhile.
No sign of despair
is absent: of madness, no mark but thou
bearest.

What stirs thee? What means
this strange trouble, my king?
Pray thy story impart.
To a good man and true
thou wilt breathe it.
Of old,
with thy consort I came
to thy mansion: even I,
by Tyndareus sent, one part of her
dower;
to serve on the bride and be loyal.

AGAM. Forth then,
unto Argos
this missive bear thou.—
And more,
in its folds
what the tablet conceals,

AGAMEMNON'S RUTH

by word I will tell thee,
all that's writ here; for faithful indeed
art thou, to the queen, to us all.

O. M. Say on, make it known,
that my tongue with thy written decree
may accord.

AGAM. [*reads*]

“To my first tidings now I send,
“child of Leda, this new word:
“not to guide our daughter forth,
“toward Euboea's bosomy wing,
“unto wave-spent Aulis.
“At some future hour will we
“spread the nuptial banquet.”

O. M. But Achilles, thus baffled,—
how, pray, can he fail
his heart-swelling anger to visit amain
on thee and thy spouse?
Here is danger. Declare,
what say'st thou?

AGAM. The name, not the blame,
is Achilles'. Of nuptials
naught knows he, knows naught of our
scheme:

how I solemnly sanction'd
the gift to his arms
of our daughter as bride.

O. M. Ah! fell was thy daring,
Agamemnon, my lord.

AGAMEMNON'S RUTH

Thy daughter, to wed the goddess-born
man,
thou didst promise: and then
for the Danaans' sake
wouldst lead her to death.

AGAM. Woe is me! my good spirit hath fail'd
me.

Woe, woe! to the curse I am fallen.—
But go! ply thy foot,
not with step of old age.

O. M. 'T is speedy, O king.

AGAM. Hearken now!
By the grove-border'd fountains sit
not!

Let no slumber beguile thee!

O. M. Forbear, say no more.

AGAM. Each time, far or near,
some cross-road when passing,
spy about thee; beware,
lest thou mark not the flying of wheels
that roll past,
to the Danaan ships
hither bringing my child.
For if so the convoy thou do then en-
counter,
straight back turn the steeds,
swing the lash,
for the solemn Cyclopean homestead
straight aiming.

AGAMEMNON'S RUTH

O. M. 'T shall be done.

AGAM. Sally forth!

O. M. But for these
my tidings, declare
what surety shall be,
to thy child, to thy queen?

AGAM. The *seal* (guard it well)
on the missive thou bringest.—
Away! Pale already
yon day-beam (the sun-god,
his chariot of fire)
gleams out. Seize thy portion of toil.
Of mortals, not one
all-prosper'd shall be,
consummately blest.

None is born but his birthright is
sorrow.

Temple Song

ION

(In front of the temple at daybreak)

MARK yon bright steeds and chariot of the
Sun!

Now on the world below

He beams; and while each star,

Before that fiery ray,

Back into solemn night doth run,

Parnassus' pathless summits take the glow

Kindled for mortals by the orb of day.

Now, in Apollo's temple, roofward floats

Curling myrrh-incense; and the Pythian maid

Sits at her tripod shrine,

Chanting for Hellas the prophetic notes

Echoed from Phoebus' lips divine.

Then come, ye Delphian servitors of Him!

Approach Castalia's silver-eddy fount;

And at the dewy brim

Your hands with pure drops lave,

Ere to these sacred precincts ye may mount;

Guarding a hush'd and holy tongue;

TEMPLE SONG

Letting no voice untoward thrill the ear
Of them who crave
Their dark oracular destinies to hear.

Whilst I the toil renew
That, from a child, hath ever claim'd my care:
To sweep, with wreath'd laurel-bough, each holy
avenue
Of Phoebus' halls;
His floor with freshest waters to bedew;
And with my bow and arrows put to flight
The wing'd intruders that would mar
The spotless statues white.
Fatherless, motherless I grew;
And so I render to these fostering walls
The grateful service to kind parents due.

TEMPLE SONG

Ply, then, ply your frondage green,
Besom of fresh-blooming bay:
Over the pavement's marble sheen
So by His altar softly sway.

Scion of groves immortal, where
Quenchless waters round you play'd,
Leaping to bright ambrosial air;
Or in the sacred myrtle-shade:

Help me still my homage bring,
That to Apollo's fane I pay,
Soon as the day-star trims his wing,
All day long, and day by day.

Io Paeon! io Paeon!
Glory, glory be to thee,
O child of Leto, through eternity.

TEMPLE SONG

Sweet is the toil and beautiful,
Laid, O Phoebus, on my hand
At thy radiant vestibule,
Prophet-portal of the land.

Honor the guerdon is of grace :
Heaven's illustrious servant I,
Bounden to no mortal race,
But to the gods, who never die.

Holy labor wearieth not ;
Witness, in glad praise, I bear
Unto the giver of my lot,
Lord of the temple, great and fair.

Io Paeon ! io Paean !
Glory, glory be to thee,
O child of Leto, through eternity.

But from the busy sheaf
Of trailing laurel-leaf
'T is time to turn ;
And with my golden urn
Now will I sprinkle forth
The crystal streams of Earth,
That gush'd from bubbling Castaly,
And scatter'd are by me
With holy hand and pure.

TEMPLE SONG

O, that forevermore
My service may endure
To Phoebus, and cease not—
Save for some blissful happy lot.

Ha! ha!
There they begin their flight,
Leaving their aeries on Parnassus' height.—
I tell you, hold aloof
From the resplendent roof
And gilded cornice rare.

Eagle, beware!
Straightway an arrow from my bow,
Herald of Jove, shall lay thee low,
Tyrant of birds with crooked claws.

Ho! yonder another draws
Nigh to these altars, sailor of the sky.
A swan this time! Pass by, pass by,
O scarlet-footed traveler, ere I shoot.
Nay, not Apollo's lute,
Tuned to your trumpet voice,
Shall leave you choice;
But to the Delian lake
Your winged passage take.
Mind! or this folly thou wilt rue,
When blood shall trickle to a swan-song true.

TEMPLE SONG

Aha! what 's here?
What stranger-bird,
Coming to frame some nest of leaves
Under the consecrated eaves
For his young brood? This twanging string
Shall hurry hence your wing—
What! mind'st not? Nay, go seek
Alphêus' eddies far; there multiply your race:
To Phoebus' holy dwelling-place
Harm shall not come.—Yet am I loath to kill
You, winged harbingers of Heaven's will
To mortal men.
Only to Phoebus, then,
To whom this life I owe,
Let my fond service and my toil go on.

Honor the guerdon is of grace:
Heaven's illustrious servant I,
Bounden to no mortal race,
But to the gods, who never die.

Io Paeon! io Paean!
Glory, glory be to thee,
O child of Leto, through eternity.

Wings Triumphant

Χαίρετε ἀπτῆνες.

Wings Triumphant

INVITATION

TO a wonderful new sight
We, the birds, hereby invite
All you earthy creeping things,
Everybody without wings.
If you will behave, you may
Come into our nest to-day;
Sit around us in natty rows,
Wearing your best Sunday clothes;
Look as much like spick-and-span
Jugs and flower-pots as you can.

Welcome to the wingless.

How is this, old Walk-on-legs,
For a place to warm our eggs?
Something more than sticks and straw—
Finer than you ever saw!
We drop down here from the air,
You may crawl in anywhere.
No, there is no need to rush,
And be sure you do not push
Into the wrong piece of pie
Just because you cannot fly!

Welcome to the wingless.

WINGS TRIUMPHANT

O, you want to know, no doubt,
How birds ever did make out
To fence in the atmosphere
And fling up this aery here!
That can be learnt from no other
Than our little fairy mother;
You are here now, not to ask
Idle questions, but to bask—
And be baked—a little while
In the sunshine of our smile.

Welcome to the wingless.

We think, when we bring our show
To an end and let you go,
After everyone has heard
The jokes of the Dicky bird
And has seen the winged man
Waltzing with a pelican,
You will be apt to remark,
There was *never* such a lark
As when Pop Chickwin was crown'd
In the merry-go-half-round!

Welcome to the wingless.

WINGS TRIUMPHANT

GRAND FINALE

MESSENGER

O YE all-fortunate, more than tongue can tell!

O feather'd tribes, thrice-blessed, welcome now
Your lord and master to his happy home.

How doth he come, more radiant than the beam
Of some effulgent star in house of gold!

Not the ray'd brilliance of the far-flashing sun
Hath shone like him, who draws nigh with his
bride

Of beauty ineffable, whilst in his hand he wields
Zeus' weapon, the wing-tufted thunderbolt.

Unspeakable fragrance into the welkin's depth
Rises, a wondrous sight; and incense-coils

Float idly on the weird smoke-flapping breezes.—

But lo, behold himself! 'T is time to ope

The Muse's holy all-propitious mouth.

Enter CHICKWIN, BASILY, and train.

CHORUS

Fall in, fall out; fly right-about;

Waft wide the airy portal:

With whirring wings and feathery flings

Surround the happy mortal!

WINGS TRIUMPHANT

O! O! O! what a beauteous bride
Is that disporting by his side!

LEADER OF CHORUS

All hail, O thou who blest
This city of a nest
With a divine alliance.—

Immense, immense the luck
The feather'd tribes have struck,
Soaring by *his* science.

Greet now with hymeneal shout,
Chorals of the wedding-rout,
Him and his Basily.

CHORUS

Once upon a time the Fates
Queenly Hera thus did bring
To the most august of mates,
The high-throned Olympian king;
Sounding *their* praise even so,
Hymen Hymenaeus O!

Gold-wing'd Eros was best man,
Tight the cherub drew the reins,
Guiding an immortal span
Over the celestial plains.

WINGS TRIUMPHANT

Happy Hera long ago!
Hymen Hymenaeus O!

CHICKWIN

With your songs, with your hymns,
I'm delighted, I'm sure:
Many thanks for your words.—

Sing, now, straight on and glorify
Our red lightnings of the sky;
Our dread thunder-peals, that break
Till the black Earth seems to quake.

CHORUS

How gorgeous the gleam of the gold-twisted
flashes!
How awful the flame of the fierce thunder-
bolt,
With its cracks and its crashes,
By Zeus brandish'd of old.

O ye rumbling thunders grand,
Cloudbursts of the mountain-brow,
This great conqueror puts his hand
To your fulminations now;
Basily ordains it so,
Hymen Hymenaeus O!

WINGS TRIUMPHANT

CHICKWIN

Follow all, birds of a feather,
Flock and follow, as you 're led,
To the realm of sunny weather,
Where the nuptial couch is spread.—
Give me your hand, Birdie: how I
Long to dance with you to-day!
Take hold of my wings, and now I
Whisk you clear up and away!

CHORUS

Huzza, huzza! Io triumphe!
Huzza, huzza! Thrum, thrum!
Thrum on a thousand strings!
O Conqueror of Kings!

[*Exeunt.*]

Ave Piscator

*Also ye shall not use this forsayd
crafty dysporte, for no couetysnes,
to the encreasyng and sparynge
of your money oonly; but pryn-
cypally for your solace, and to
cause the helthe of your body,
and specyally of your soule.*

Ave Piscator

There are three stages or degrees
Of piscatorial mysteries.

Unnumber'd accidents must meet
To show the angler forth complete;

Eke that which in the stars is writ,
Piscator nascitur non fit;

Whilst he, on far perfection bent,
Through each successive element,

Mud, water, air, essays to climb,
Moulding his destiny sublime.

The novice,—those exist for him
Which nigh unto the *bottom* swim.

Thus, lowliest of the briny brood,
The flounder, famed for platitude;

In fresh, the bullhead or horn'd pout;
The eel, long-lived and long-drawn-out.

These teach, to hold with sandy grip
What chances through the fingers slip;

AVE PISCATOR

To brave the heads and horns of things
That clash with fond imaginings;

How to doze timely, yet be full
Of feeling for a welcome pull;

To learn what purposes of state
They serve who only sit and wait.

The second stage, by one degree
Above the bottom aims to be.

Here, through the *middle* waters gleam
Perch, shiner, chub, the plucky bream:

A scaly company, yet each
Blest with some faculty to teach.

It is the realm of doubt and fear,
Wild hopes and disappointments drear.

But in his soul who faltereth not
Celestial patience is begot;

His boyish fancy is imbued
With love of rain and solitude;

Round him a frivolous, inane,
Much-nibbling world will surge in vain.

AVE PISCATOR

The third sphere is the *top*: and few,
To its high ordinances true,
Will for the last probation wait,
Which sifts the small fry from the great.

There is a finny vagabond,
Long-nosed marauder of the pond,
Whom nature suffereth to exist,
Expressly that he may assist
The callow neophyte to rise
Through spoon-lore to the Book of Flies.
Between the upper and mid way
The *pickerel* darts upon his prey.

Him you, when spoonless, can feel sure
Of taking with batrachian lure.

Draw froggy's trousers off in haste,
Decapitate him at the waist;

The nether remnant then, hook'd fast,
Fantastically dangling, cast

Out where the lily-pads make way
There for the still, black water—hey!

A swell, a vortex, and a splash!
A tug down on the supple ash!

Leave him to mumble it a mite—
Now hoist him, higher than a kite!

AVE PISCATOR

[The couplets here omitted touch upon the achievements of those to whom the sacred utensils have been shown by the Hierophant, who have answered the questions propounded by him, and have been finally advanced from the Lesser to the Greater mysteries of the Top.]

And yet no titles to his name,
Parchment prerequisites to fame;

No tassel'd cap and hooded gown
Invest the angler with renown.

A something in his eye, his walk,
Or in the flavor of his talk,

Something not on the prosaic plan
Stamps the inveterate fisherman.

His grammar is the cloud-fleck'd dawn,
A forest path his lexicon,

His specialty the universe.
He can songs make. He doth converse

Familiarly with jay and wren,
Or dallies with the water-hen.

Oft with the chipmunk he breaks bread.—
At drowsy noon, where rests his head

Odors of terebinth and balm,
Exhaling slumber soft and calm,

AVE PISCATOR

Wrap him in dreams.—Anon, awake—
What peals the sultry stillness break?

What shadow sweeps from ledge to ledge
Before the storm-cloud's livid edge?

Aeolian voices, piping shrill,
Wail from the pines that crown the hill.

“ 'T is time,” I hear Piscator say,
“ To unjoint and quit; no more to-day.”

Behold him thread the oozy trail
Down the dark wood athwart the gale.

The swishing flood through holm and holt,
The crack and fizzle of the bolt

Cannot put out his pipe, nor dim
His vision. 'T is enough for him

Against his sturdy side to feel
The swaying burthen of his creel.

Prologue and Epilogue

GOOD friends, who, while ye graciously
assist,

Do lend our cause some reason to exist:

Your selves to welcome, is my welcome task,

With cordial salutation; and to ask

Your kind attention, ere the curtain rise

On this bright circle of expectant eyes.

Know then, we youthful toilers love to go

Adown the fields of wisdom, gleanings slow

Some sheaves of knowledge from each bygone
age;

Whereof not least full-fruited is the STAGE.

A stage the whole world did to Shakespeare
seem:

And such, our little college-world we deem;

The students, players. Through these classic
shades

Full many a flippant trifle masquerades,

Acting, from day to day, a learned part,

With little love of learning in his heart.

Sincere, the most; and yet, alas! too few

Keen-eyed, the false to winnow from the true:

Content, with husks to fill the growing mind,

But to the precious golden kernel blind.

PROLOGUE

Wherefore we hold well worthy of our zeal
That ancient art, whose power to reveal
The truth of life and manners lives to-day.
As, by the magic of the "cathode ray,"
Through some huge pachyderm's dense skull
we gain

A peep into his wondrous pygmy brain,
So the quick point, two-hundred years ago,
Of Master CONGREVE's witty pen pierced through
The pedant's dulness; sketch'd the madman's
air;

Laid the self-seeker's frail devices bare:
Yet swift to know true merit, and accord
To heavenly constancy its sweet reward.—
The Play sufficient persons offers. We
Essay to represent them. You shall see.

EPILOGUE

Not, when the curtain falls, I apprehend,
Are our fond efforts wholly at an end.
Still lingers something, at the drama's close,
Like the faint perfume of the folded rose.
Apparent still before the half-shut eye
Fair faces, graceful forms float dimly by;
And voices to fresh voices answering,
Still through the corridors of memory ring.
Therefore, while yet my mates some thought
 may claim,
For your applause I thank you, in their name.
May favoring Fortune on your steps attend,
As homeward soon your several ways ye wend;
Prosper your undertakings; and increase
Your substance, gather'd in the lap of Peace.
Meantime, I charge both old and young, fail not
To store the truths our comedy has taught.
Predict the race not always of the swift;
A little *foresight* is a dangerous gift.
Not always falls the battle to the strong;
As *Samson* learn'd, by living over long.
For man, the less to risk, the less to rue.
And, each young woman, live for wisdom too:
To be *angelic*, seem not all-divine,
But prove the madness of your *valentine*.

Choral Song

LEADER

BREAKING over Ocean's stream,
Hesperus, of all the sky
Best and brightest is thy beam;
To thy beam our songs reply.

Sunset rays our dresses wove,
Rainbow-hues without the rain.
Golden fruit in every grove,
Tinkling to our fond refrain.

CHORUS

Best and brightest in the sky,
To his beam our harps reply.
We his singing children are,
Daughters of the Evening Star.
(round dance)

CHORAL SONG

LEADER

Seven sisters born of mother Night,
Our father took us on his knees.
She faded when we saw the light,
And left us all *Hesperides*.

The Gardens of the Gods are here;
These founts, these flowers our emblems are.
Our father's eye is ever near,
Our mother's spirit never far.

CHORUS

Seven sisters born of mother Night,
She faded when we saw the light.
Our father took us on his knees
And christen'd us *Hesperides*.
(*round dance*)

Scyros

MY island in the blue sea swims,
The ceaseless ripple laps it round;
Its frothy edge the petrel skims,

Her twitterings tuned to hoarser sound
That echoes where each tireless wave
Searches the bounds of cove and cave.

A mountain's head my island seems,
Of envious waters shaken free;
Neck-like, below, a green strip gleams,
And wrinkled brow bent on the sea.
From crag to crag my black goats spring
Whilst by the marge I dance and sing.

On this my mansion's pillar'd walls,
Fair Asia's border fronting wide,
The earliest ray of morning falls,
The evening shadows soonest glide
When the spent day-beams have declined
To sombre lands that loom behind.

Thence on its vengeful errand sent,
Wafted by myriad sail and oar,
I saw that mighty armament
Speeding to seize the opposing shore—
Most sure, I heard my father say,
Their doom, to be slain and to slay.

Nephthe's Song

THE Nile is rising, rising;
All silently its tide
From sources past surmising
Steals on the country-side.
Full well I know what fountains
My bosom's sorrow swell,
Hid not shadowy mountains
Where frosts and vapors dwell.

The lotus-lily, sleeping,
Smiles in her watery dream,
One star her visage keeping
Beneath his steadfast beam.
O, would that heaven-lit slumber,
That wave-borne bed were mine,
Where trouble cannot cumber,
Nor lodestar cease to shine.

The Nile is falling, falling;
Its quickening rills subside,
To earth new life recalling
And joys of harvest-tide.
Mine eyes beheld the flower,
My hand reach'd toward the tree.
There came no ripening hour;
No fruit, no fruit for me.

Hymn

OUR God, O thou Most High, how far
Thy benefits extended are,
Thy mercies how profound!
When from the lowest pit we cry
Thou hearest, though the floods be nigh;
For to thy might nor sea, nor sky,
Nor desert setteth bound.

So may, O Lord, thy fostering hand
Preserve and guide us, in the land
Of Goshen while we dwell.
Then shall a stronghold of thy praise
Be stablish'd, without end of days,
In Goshen when thy children raise
The tents of Israel.

Whose tribes, some time, led forth by thee,
O Lord of hosts, once more shall see
The fields of Canaan.
The stem shall stretch its tendrils wide,
In fruitful branches multiplied,
From Jordan to the salt-sea side,
Beërsheba to Dan.

HYMN

Our story, in far countries heard,
Shall make each name a household word,
Each deed a memory,
Which in their troubled hearts will burn
When for a sign the people yearn,
To Zion still for refuge turn,
And to Jehovah cry.

Oft shall resound by many a shore
Some voice of Rachel weeping sore,
Nor will be comforted;
And for all languages the same,
The nations in thy holy name,
God of our fathers, shall proclaim
Their tribute to the dead.

So may, O Lord, thy fostering hand
Preserve and guide us, in the land
Of Goshen while we dwell.
Then shall a stronghold of thy praise
Be stablish'd, without end of days,
In Goshen when thy children raise
The tents of Israel.

The Athenian's Vision

Δήμητεο ἡ θρέψασα τὴν ἐμὴν φρένα,
εἶναί με τῶν σῶν ἄξιον μυστηρίων.

The Athenian's Vision

What land?—What sky?—What people?—

What thronging faces seem

To float before these waking eyes, still laden
with their dream?

Whither, O whither have my thoughts, by dim
remembrance bound,

Been wafted from that slumber on Demeter's
holy ground?—

For I, amid the mystic rout,—it seems but yes-
terday,—

Forth through the Dipylon at eve, along the
Sacred Way,

From Athens moved: full voices round me wove
a solemn spell,

While on the olive groves each gleam of torch-
light weirdly fell.

And in Demeter's temple, at Eleusis, I had
view'd

The symbols of her sorrow pledging our beati-
tude:

I had seen the gifts unspeakable; the sweet hopes
I had heard,

Thrilling his soul whose silent lips the golden
key hath barr'd.

THE ATHENIAN'S VISION

Then, wandering forth alone, where deep below
the moonlit fane
Shimmer'd the wavelets that lap round the still
Thriasian Plain,
Mute revery compassing my heart, the inward
eye yet turn'd
Back to that mystic spectacle—the fruits, the
wise arts learn'd

From the great bounteous Mother, from the lost
Daughter, who
From death was render'd up to life:—thus rapt,
myself I threw
On earth's cool bosom down, and mused.—The
vague stars, one by one,
Darkling, grew faint and fainter; the night-
wind's voice was gone;

I slept.—Anon a vision,—O! listen to the tale,—
Rending the sombre shroud of sleep, beam'd out,
upon the pale
Curtains of dreamland pictured, and, in accents
echoing still,
Utter'd the grave monitions which my awe-
struck spirit fill.

THE ATHENIAN'S VISION

Methought, in presence manifest the Earth-
Mother divine
Stood by my couch with gracious mien and coun-
tenance benign.
A myrtle crown she wore; one arm on a wheat-
sheaf did rest,
Full-ear'd; the right hand pointed far toward
sunset and the west.

A voice as when soft harvest-airs o'er rippling
corn-lands blow—
“My true initiate,” it said, “scion of Athens,
know
“There are twin brothers, Sleep and Death:
mine eyes alone may see
“What their similitude portends to frail hu-
manity.

“Thy city, famed and beautiful, thou shalt be-
hold no more;
“Through four and twenty centuries this slum-
ber shall endure,
“Till on a new, Hesperian shore thy wondering
lids unseal'd
“Swim with the radiance azure skies to lands
yet nameless yield.

THE ATHENIAN'S VISION

“A people, to whom the gifts of earth in ampler
store shall fall

“Than fell in that far Golden Age the minstrel
would recall.

“Nor oil nor wine pour'd I of old so plentiful
and sweet

“As shall for the fair clime be pour'd thy wak-
ing eyes will greet.

“Twixt serried hills and the blue waves a riband
of rich green,

“Border'd with fruited gold; afar, the snow-
lined summits' sheen

“Gleams out, as from a spirit land; river with
forest blends,

“Where Ocean with his cooling breath Elysian
tribute sends.

“For them, those hallow'd implements, Deme-
ter's gift to man,

“Simple erstwhile and plain, the rake, the plow,
the winnowing-fan,

“Sickle and pruning-hook,—the same, at my be-
hest, shall change

“Into new things of mighty mould and figura-
tion strange.

THE ATHENIAN'S VISION

“So, when their teeming products, the gates
o’erflowing, speed

“Far forth, by land or watery way, ten-million
mouths to feed;

“When their white flocks, their kine adown ten-
thousand pastures graze,

“My name let them remember yet, let them
cease not to raise

“Songs of thanksgiving unto me, Demeter,
mother of arts,

“Parent of peace through all the years, whose
bounty bends men’s hearts,

“By the upspringing of the seed, its leafage, and
its bloom,

“Toward thoughts eternal and high hopes of a
new life to come.”

THE ATHENIAN'S VISION

Hail, then; all hail! ye people, whom now mine
eyes behold,
Even as mighty Pallas' civic host they saw of old
In Dionysus' theatre, high-seated—hail! and
wait
For that the goddess ushers in, through her
initiate.

Lo! where the sacrificial throng with solemn
step moves on,
Born of the marble forms that graced the sculptured
Parthenon.
Link ye a past age to your own, join ye in one
refrain
Athena's green-gray olive and Demeter's yellow
grain.

Greeting

Χαίρετ' ἀστικὸς λεώς,
ἴκταρ ἤμενοι Διός,
παρθένου φίλας φίλοις
εὐφρονοῦντες ἐν χρόνῳ.
Πάλλαδος δ' ὑπὸ πτεροῖς
ὄντας ἄζεται πατήρ.

Greeting

HIGH-THRONED, expectant, gracious
throng,

Rejoice! be glad whilst ye behold

What to your thoughts we would unfold
And teach through solemn scene and song:
Sweet Mercy bidding vengeance cease;
Mad flight and horror crown'd with peace.—

O prayerful fugitive, faint not!

A mother's life-blood stains that sword:

But with thy hand the Heavenly Word
Guided its edge; and through thee wrought,
Thus to thy sire's requital bound,
A vengeance awful and profound.

Faint not! Somewhere, solution true

The deep ensanguined problem waits:

No flout of harsh un pitying fates;
Though the insatiate hell-born crew,
Waked by the phantom-mother pale,
Even to Parnassus scent thy trail.

Illustrious Athens! How that name

Doth on my listening spirit fall

Like a celestial trumpet-call
Sounding no transient earthly fame.
For what, that men to learning owe
Or speed or skill or wealth can show,

GREETING

Shall with such benison compare
 As in thy accents, Pallas, flow'd
 When their rich harmony bestow'd
On way-worn Oedipus a share
Of hallow'd soil to be his grave,
And freedom to Orestes gave.

Hark! 't is a gentler, holier tone
 Than even-handed justice dares
 To breathe where seated wisdom wears
Pure-human symbols flung alone:
"This vote my hand shall cast for thee;
"So the tied ballot still sets free.

"Nor shall the sable-shrouded band
 "Pass unappeased; but, minded well,
 "Near my august tribunal dwell,
"True-vengeful warders of the land:
"From wrath and ravin to refrain
"And conjure blessing out of bane."—

Rejoice! and on your inmost hearts
 Be the immortal story writ.
For whoso hath been call'd to sit
Where Pallas of her charm imparts,
And under its wing'd shelter sleeps,
The Father of all mercies keeps.

Symposium Metricum

Ἐν μύρτου κλαδὶ τὸ ξίφος φορῆσω,
ὥσπερ Ἀρμόδιος καὶ Ἀριστογείτων,
ὅτε τὸν τύραννον κτανέτην
ἰσονόμους τ' Ἀθῆνας ἐποίησάτην.

Symposium Metricum

LO, the lot and number mark
Me to be symposiarch.
Of this banquet I am lord;
Hear me and obey my word.

Hear me, ye whose eye-light glows
Under wreaths of bay and rose;
Lips that curl at sound of mine,
Moisten'd by the god-sent vine.

Clearest, sweetest chants the muse
When the arm of Bacchus woos,
With ambrosial fingers prest
To a yet diviner breast.

Then the trembling passions start
From the barriers of the heart;
Then the thought leaps to the tongue,
And the hope dies not unsung.

Genius then flings out a beam
From his bright, ecstatic dream;
He whom fates have burthen'd low
Drops one fragment of his woe.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

So be this Euterpe's hour.
Own ye, friend to friend, her power;
Till I last take up the strain,
And we crown our cups again.

Still! stiller—palm to brow,
As I let the myrtle-bough
Cross from hand to hand along,
And from voice to voice the song.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

WITH the bough methought a spark
Thrill'd me, O symposiarch,
Of the soul that flashes yet
In the measures thou hast set.

Well the god deserves of youth,
If he drives the blade of truth
Through the sordid chains that bind
Or the body or the mind.

Freedom be to me the breath
Of the life I owe to death.
Freedom, won with groan and cheer
In the tempest of the spear.

Freedom's pledge of equal aims,
Equal hopes, and equal names.
Freedom's deep and deathless tone,
Echoing round each despot's throne.

Freedom, mixt with every thought
Art or phantasy has wrought
Into shapes which gave to see
Signs of greater shapes to be.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

Freedom, marching in the van
Of the proud advance of man,
All that peace and wisdom yield
Mirror'd in her burnish'd shield.—

Claims a free hand thus the right,
Leafy symbol of delight,
Thee thy tuneful way to send
At the hilted weapon's end.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

IS there aught in glittering steel
Moves an awe-struck heart to feel
What the heights, the depths attain'd
By the will of man unchain'd?

His all-reaching ken profound
Air nor sea avails to bound;
Cave nor wilderness, to rest
Trackless of his cunning quest.

From the wave he lifts the pearl,
O'er whose hing'd casket whirl
Whelming eddies, through the dim
Grottoes of the trident-king.

Wide on billowy paths and far
Flies for him the sail-wing'd car;
Points him many a nameless strand,
Sunset-realms of wonder-land.

Earth her buried treasure-room
Opes to him, and, from the gloom
Of its niches dank and cold,
Beams the tempting blush of gold.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

In her vaults of marble-vein
Delves his hand, to rear the fane—
Saffron gleams of Eos lave
Peristyle and architrave!

Now to evil, now to good
Tends the soul, with fitful mood:
Here, to dust low-fluttering—there,
To fair ether soaring fair.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

HAPPY they, whose acts fulfil
Not some earthly mistress' will:
Who but Wisdom's bidding hear,
Her immortal anger fear.

Them no longer, passion-rack'd,
Fickle-witted whims distract:
Wisdom's nomes harmonious all
From her silver plectrum fall.

Me the piny wreath lures not,
Over Isthmian courses sought;
Not the loud Olympian meed,
Earn'd by fiery-footed steed.

Not the wrestler's firm renown
Sways my fealty to a crown
Wrung from pleasure, pride, and pelf
In the struggle of myself.

Stand not I to argue it
Where the gaping *many* sit:
Not with smooth, obsequious plea
Wise to seem, but wise to be.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

What the vain mob vaunts to know,
Wisdom proves, with question slow.
While the glib-tongued rhetor prates,
Wisdom ponders, wisdom waits.

While their factions rub and fret,
While their empires rise and set,
Wisdom fares her patient way
With the torch that shines for aye.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

BEST beyond a holier sphere
Loves my charmèd eye to peer
Of the flight from age to age:
Rose the minstrel ere the sage.

Rose with sounding harp of praise,
Strung to themes of ancient days,
Deeds heroic to rehearse,
Roll'd in torrent-mocking verse.

Rose with lute, and faltering line
Of a threnody divine,
When new anguish, welling fast,
Dimm'd his vision of the past.

Rose with staid, majestic mien
On the throng-beholden *scene*,
There to teach what issues bide
Blood-besprinkled ways of pride.

All that drips from calm or care
Poesy in chalice rare
Pours, and blends the world of light
With the mystic world of night.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

Many a tranquil chord has rung
Through the Dirge of Ilium;
Many a paeon, strong to save,
Echoed from Cocytus' wave.

When Death consecrates his own,
Poesy, with votive stone,
Still her gentle tribute brings,
Still the muse of memory sings.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

COMES to me the myrtle? Now
Softly be enshrined the bough:
Now Love's hymn let me attune,
Whom Love's emblem brings the boon.

Sweet may ring your gleeful rhyme,
High the chant of freedom chime,
But the songs that pierce the graves
Are the songs of Eros' slaves.

In their words a crisping flame,
In their tones a winsome shame,
In their cadences a sigh
As of leaves whose fall is nigh.

Dire, invincible the works
Of the potent god who lurks
By rude fold, or gilded hall,
On his hapless prey to fall;

Sudden-vengeful ire who wreaks
From his lair of virgin cheeks,
Haunts the curve of comely limbs,
'Neath the misty eyelid swims.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

Swift, his supplicants to spurn
Whilst at altar's marge they burn
Incense of regretful years,
With a litany of tears.

Eros' branch has done the round:
See!—to Eros' statue bound,
Droops its green—the while we hark
To thy lay, symposiarch.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

HELLAS, Hellas, lo! I bring
Thee the lay I rise to sing.
Gods and heroes, lend my voice
Numbers worthy of the choice.

Hellas, first in name of thee
Brave men swore they would be free.
First, then, in thy cup be pour'd
Crimson glories of the sword.

In thy praise resounded high
Music, born of sea and sky:
Wreathe I, so, this rim along
Flowers of never-dying song.

Of the nations, Hellas, thine
Beauty chose, to hold her shrine:
Here in ruby waves I trace
Memories of the fairest face.

Pledge me now the triple-crown'd,
If of love ye know the sound;
If the trumpet, if the lyre
Sets the heart of youth on fire.

SYMPOSIUM METRICUM

Drink to Hellas, as she stands;
Hellas, Hellas, land of lands:
Drink to art and eloquence,
All that speaks to mind or sense;

Drink to words of law and right,
Drink to liberty and light,
Drink to beauty, drink to fame,
Drink to an immortal name.

THE END





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